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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

General Assembly

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit was created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966 and was extended thereafter under Assembly resolutions 2735 A (XXV) of 17 December 1970 and 2924 B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972. By its resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, the Assembly decided to establish the Joint Inspection Unit as a standing subsidiary organ and approved the statute of the Unit, with effect from 1 January 1978. Under the terms of article 1, paragraph 2 of the statute, the Unit is responsible to the General Assembly and, similarly, to the competent legislative organs of the participating organizations that accept the statute.

2. The Unit is composed of 11 Inspectors appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of their special experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions, and with due regard to the principles of equitable geographical distribution and reasonable rotation. Inspectors serve in their personal capacity and are appointed for a term of five years, renewable for one term.

3. The Inspectors have the broadest powers of investigation in all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of services and the proper use of funds and, to those ends, make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. They are mandated to provide an independent view through inspections and evaluations aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination among organizations. In pursuance of its objectives of enhancing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system, the Unit is required to satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of the resources available for carrying out those activities. The Unit may issue reports, notes and confidential letters. Reports are addressed to one or more organizations, or to all the organizations when the subject is of interest to the system as a whole, for consideration by the competent legislative organs of the organizations concerned. Notes and confidential letters are submitted to executive heads for their own use, as they may decide. The Unit submits annual reports to the General Assembly and to the competent organs of the participating organizations.

4. The Unit is assisted by an Executive Secretary and by such staff as may be authorized in the budget of the Unit. The budget is included in the regular budget of the United Nations and its expenditures are shared by the participating organizations.

5. The present report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2001, is the thirty-third of its kind prepared by the Unit since its establishment.

6. In compliance with requests made by the General Assembly in paragraphs 7, 12 and 14 of its resolution 56/245 of 24 December 2001, the relevant information and comments by the Unit are included in the corresponding sections of chapter III below.

Chapter II
General information

A. Participating organizations

7. The following organizations have accepted the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit: the United Nations, including its programmes, funds and offices,[1] the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

B. Composition

8. The composition of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2001 was as follows. The member's term of office expires on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses.

Sumihiro **Kuyama** (Japan), Chairman (2004)

Armando **Duque González** (Colombia), Vice-Chairman (2003)

Doris **Bertrand-Muck** (Austria) (2005)

Fatih **Bouayad-Agha** (Algeria) (2002)

Ion **Gorita** (Romania) (2005)

Homero L. **Hernández-Sánchez** (Dominican Republic) (2002)

Eduard **Kudryavtsev** (Russian Federation) (2002)

Francesco **Mezzalama** (Italy) (2002)

Wolfgang **Münch** (Germany) (2005)

Khalil I. **Othman** (Jordan) (2002)

Louis-Dominique **Ouedraogo** (Burkina Faso) (2005)

9. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, which provides that the Unit shall elect each year from among the Inspectors a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, the Unit re-elected Sumihiro **Kuyama** as Chairman and Armando **Duque González** as Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 2002.

C. Human and financial resources

10. During the reporting period, the Joint Inspection Unit was assisted by a secretariat that consisted of an Executive Secretary (D-2), eight research officers (2 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3 and 2 P-2), one information technology officer (P-3), three research assistants (1 G-7 and 2 G-6) and six other General Service staff. However, owing to a number of staff movements, in particular, retirements of professional staff, the Unit was not fully staffed for most of the year, which partly contributed to its issuing fewer reports than in previous years (see paragraph 13 below).

11. The new programme-budget for 2002-2003, approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, provides for the abolition of the two P-2 posts previously held by the Unit and for the creation of a new P-4 post and two new General Service posts, in addition to an increase in resources for individual contractors. This reallocation of staff resources offers a welcome opportunity to strengthen research support to the Unit in a somewhat flexible manner. In fact, the new post configuration, combined with a reorganization of the tasks assigned to General Service staff, should reinforce the research as well as the supportive capacity of the Unit.

12. The amount approved for the biennium 2002-2003 ($7,546,100) remains basically the same as the appropriation for the biennium 2001-2002.

Chapter III
Summary of main activities

A. Programme of work

13. During the period under consideration, the Joint Inspection Unit pursued the series of comprehensive reviews of the administration and management of its participating organizations that it commenced in 1999 (see A/56/34). Thus, after completing such reviews for ILO and UNESCO in previous years, it completed two reports in 2001 on the administration and management of ITU and WHO, respectively. Although the report on ITU had not been included in the original programme of work of the Unit, it was undertaken at the subsequent request of the Secretary-General of that organization. As part of its 2002 programme of work, the Unit has now embarked on a similar review for FAO as well as for UNIDO. While they each relate to an individual agency, these reports provide very useful input to compare policies and practices of the management and administration of organizations confronted with similar problems, and thus spread best practices.

14. Four other reports were issued in 2001, three of them dealing with system-wide issues. As noted in paragraph 10 above, high staff turnover accounted in part for this relatively low output. It should also be noted that, as in previous years, several reports could not be finalized as expected in 2001 owing to the delays of some of the secretariats of participating organizations in providing the Unit with information and/or comments required by the Unit (see paras. 27-32). Thus, at the time of the writing of the present report, there were some 14 reports and two notes under preparation. Taking this into account, the Unit decided to include only five new reports and one new note in its programme of work for 2002 in order to ensure the prompt completion of all ongoing reports.

B. Interactions

1. Member States and legislative organs

15. The Joint Inspection Unit has continued focusing its efforts to enhance its interactions with representatives of Member States, both individually and as groups, during the preparation of reports and/or during their presentation to the legislative organs.

2. Participating organizations

16. Meetings were also held by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Inspectors and the Executive Secretary with a number of executive heads of participating organizations and other high-level officials of the United Nations system in order to exchange views on issues of common interest and in connection with the preparation of reports.

17. In a number of instances, when the Unit's reports were taken up by the legislative organs of the participating organizations, the Inspectors concerned introduced or otherwise participated in the discussion on the reports and/or followed up on their deliberations. In addition, the Chairman, some of the Inspectors and the Executive Secretary attended the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and participated in the meetings of the Fifth Committee and in informal consultations on agenda items concerning the Unit. On 24 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted a substantive resolution (56/245) on the Unit.

3. Oversight bodies

18. In paragraph 12 of resolution 56/245, the General Assembly welcomed the initial steps taken by the Unit with other external and internal oversight bodies of the United Nations system to develop interaction and intensify relations with a view to achieving better coordination among them with respect, in particular, to the oversight coverage and sharing of best practices, thus enhancing the impact of oversight activities as a whole and endeavouring to avoid duplication, and requested the Unit to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. It also decided, in paragraph 15 of the same resolution, to review the current state of coordination and cooperation among the United Nations oversight bodies with a view to ensuring greater synergy and mutual complementarity in their joint efforts to improve the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

19. In that regard, the Joint Inspection Unit has been working with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on a comprehensive review of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) as a concrete example of collaboration between the Unit and OIOS. The Unit participated in the 32nd meeting of the representatives of internal audit services of the United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions, held in Bangkok in June 2001. It also took the initiative of organizing a joint meeting with the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, taking advantage of their meeting held in Geneva at the end of November 2001.

20. During these meetings, the Joint Inspection Unit raised the matter of enhancing coordination between oversight bodies of the United Nations system. Participants agreed that cooperation between oversight bodies is essential and efforts should be made to attain more tangible results.

C. Follow-up of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations

21. The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 56/245, also requested the Joint Inspection Unit to submit to it, as part of its current annual report, additional comments and recommendations on its experience with the system of follow-up to the reports of the Unit, focusing in particular on legislative actions and implementation of approved recommendations, including measures the Unit has taken to achieve a punctual and systematic follow-up of its recommendations as approved by the legislative organs of participating organizations.

22. During the reporting period, the Unit has continued its efforts to improve interaction with its participating organizations. In particular, and as described in its recent report on experience with the follow-up system (A/56/356), the Unit actively pursued its efforts towards the establishment of a follow-up system that would make possible a systematic tracking of the status of implementation of recommendations. Thus, the Unit concluded successful discussions with the secretariats of UNIDO and UPU, with the subsequent endorsement by the respective legislative organs, on how to handle reports of the Unit or

implement the Unit's follow-up system. It is also in the process of concluding a similar exercise with FAO, ITU, the World Food Programme (WFP) and WMO and plans to complete this process with other organizations (including IAEA, ICAO, IMO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WIPO) by the end of 2002. These agreements constitute a significant step forward. They are not, however, an end in themselves, but simply a means to improve the impact of the Unit's reports. They are aimed at facilitating the ability of the legislative organs to actually take specific action on the recommendations of the reports and the secretariats to implement them.

23. In this context, in 2001, during the course of its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions, the General Assembly took specific action, either through resolutions or decisions, on eight Joint Inspection Unit reports. By contrast, in the case of other participating organizations, only some Unit reports were actually considered by the legislative organs during the reporting period. In addition, even when a considerable number of reports were formally on the agenda of the legislative organs, specific action was rarely taken on any of them. Additional efforts will need to be undertaken by the Unit, the bureaux of the legislative organs and the secretariats concerned in order to ensure that relevant reports are submitted to the legislative organs of participating organizations and that these organs take specific actions on recommendations contained in the reports. This would enable the Unit to report with greater ease and accuracy on their implementation or lack thereof.

24. In the meantime, the Joint Inspection Unit is developing and testing internal tools for such reporting in the form of two matrixes. The first matrix, which will soon be integrated into the Unit's internal information system, will contain data that has been collected from Joint Inspection Unit participating organizations, including United Nations funds and programmes, for the follow-up of Unit reports issued from 1998 to date. Each Unit report has a specific follow-up record for each participating organization, indicating the date when the report was sent for action, the date and nature of comments made by the executive head, the date and session when the Unit report was discussed by the legislative organ and what action was taken, together with the relevant document numbers. All data from the participating organizations are integrated into a consolidated data record for each Unit report. Thus, at a glance, the status of consideration of a report by the various organizations can be identified.

25. The second matrix, which will contain more substantive information to assess the actual impact of recommendations, is currently in the testing phase. While this matrix is not yet fully operational, there are a number of encouraging cases for which the Joint Inspection Unit can clearly see the impact of its recommendations. The Unit intends to take up this matter in due course in a comprehensive manner.

26. Extensive dialogue between the Joint Inspection Unit and the relevant secretariats during the preparation of a report can lead to mutual understanding and concurrence on many of the issues, even prior to the submission of reports to the legislative organs. While the Unit encourages such dialogue as a best practice, full concurrence is not always possible and does not preclude the need for legislative organs clearly to endorse recommendations, as noted in paragraph 23 above.

27. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 56/245, the General Assembly requested the Unit to consider including in its reports, where possible, the comments of the participating organizations on its findings and recommendations and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. In view of the fact that in many instances the delay of the comments of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) is a major factor in preventing Joint Inspection Unit reports from being considered by the legislative organs in a timely manner, this request has provided the Unit with a good opportunity for a de facto review of the current practice relating to the comments of the participating organizations and CEB.

28. One of the main obstacles faced by the Unit in the handling of its reports by the participating organizations is that, quite often, individual comments on the draft reports differ from the coordinated comments of CEB.

29. Were the Unit to engage in a constructive exchange of views with participating organizations throughout the preparation process of its reports, formal and coordinated CEB comments could be considered not to be absolutely necessary, based on article 11.4 (e) of the statute of the Unit. Through this exchange of views, both the Unit and the secretariats of

the participating organizations could ensure that potential discrepancies are narrowed to a minimum.

30. In cases where discrepancies persist, the Unit would faithfully reflect them in an annex to the report concerned, with prior clearance by the relevant secretariats.

31. As a prerequisite for the successful outcome of this proposed new procedure, both the Joint Inspection Unit and the substantive units of the participating organizations concerned should be committed to a frank and professional exchange of views, bilaterally or multilaterally, during the preparation of a given report.

32. The General Assembly may wish to accept, on a trial basis, this proposed new procedure and recommend the same procedure to the legislative organs of the other participating organizations.

Notes

[1] Including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the World Food Programme (WFP), which is a subsidiary body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Annex

Joint Inspection Unit reports issued during the reporting period

A/56/274 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Management of buildings: practices of selected United Nations system organizations relevant to the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters" (JIU/REP/2001/1)

A/56/370 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations system support for science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (JIU/REP/2001/2)

Review of management and administration in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (JIU/REP/2001/3)

A/57/58 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Enhancing governance oversight role: structure, working methods and practices on handling oversight reports" (JIU/REP/2001/4)

Review of management and administration in the World Health Organization (WHO) (JIU/REP/2001/5)

Reforming the Field Service category of personnel in United Nations peace operations (JIU/REP/2001/6)

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